



# SPAWN

HINE

MAYHEW

TROY



Mayhew

WAR SPAWN



ISSUE 179 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM



TODD McFARLANE AND  
IMAGE COMICS PRESENT

STORY  
DAVID HINE

PENCILS  
MIKE MAYHEW

COLOR  
ANDY TROY

LETTERING  
TOM ORZECOWSKI

PRODUCTION  
FRANCIS TAKANEGA

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
FRANCIS TAKANEGA

COVER  
MIKE MAYHEW  
ANDY TROY

MANAGING EDITORS  
JENNIFER CASSIDY  
TYLER JEFFERS

SPAWN EDITORS  
BRIAN HABERLIN  
TODD McFARLANE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF SPAWN.COM  
TYLER JEFFERS

MANAGER OF  
INT'L. PUBLISHING  
FOR TMP  
SUZY THOMAS

PUBLISHER FOR  
IMAGE COMICS  
ERIC STEPHENSON

SPAWN CREATED BY  
TODD McFARLANE

DEDICATED TO  
THE MEMORY OF:  
MICHAEL TURNER

#### Previously in Spawn:

Al Simmons was a hit man for the US government until his C.O. Jason Wynn, betrayed him and a mysterious assassin ended Al's life. At the moment of death, Al was offered a deal by the demon Malebolgia and returned to Earth as Spawn, a creature with supernatural powers born in Hell.

As Armageddon consumed the world, Spawn turned against his masters, destroying all life on Earth. While God and Satan continue their endless conflict in a parallel universe, Spawn has re-created the world and resurrected the human race in what has become known as the White Light. The portals to Heaven and Hell are closed, leaving humanity free from the influence of angels and demons. Or so he believes...

Now Al's long-buried memories are beginning to resurface and it seems the mysterious creature known as Mammon has been manipulating Al Simmons since he was a child. When he returns to his parent's home, Al's father tells him Mammon's influence stretches back even further.

In 1881, Al's great-grandfather narrowly avoided becoming a Hellspawn. He warned that the Simmons bloodline is tainted. Al's own mother was in league with Mammon, marrying Al's father for the sole purpose of breeding this generation's Hellspawn.

But what about the intervening years? What others have been tempted by Mammon's promises?



TODD McFARLANE  
PRODUCTIONS  
SPAWN.COM



Spawn #178. Digital Edition. Published by IMAGE COMICS, 1942 University Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704. Spawn, its logo and its symbol are registered trademarks © 2008 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are TM and © 2008 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. The characters, events and stories in this publication are entirely fictional. With exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc.





TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK



TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK



TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A

TAK-A-  
TAK-A-

TAK-  
A-TAK





BRUD-D-A-B-R-U-D-D-A-B-R-U-D-D-A-

TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK

WAR IS HELL.




WHEN THE FIRST MAN  
TOOK UP A CLUB TO  
BATTLE FOR THE ROTTED  
CARCASS THAT WOULD  
KEEP HIS BELLY FULL  
FOR ONE MORE NIGHT,  
HE KNEW IT.




EVERY SOLDIER WHO FOUGHT  
THROUGH MUD, BLOOD AND  
HIS OWN SPILLED GUTS,  
WITH SWORD AND SLINGSHOT,  
MUSKET AND BAYONET,  
MACHINE-GUN, TANK AND  
MISSILE, AT ACTIUM,  
HASTINGS, AGINCOURT,  
CULLODEN, TRAFALGAR,  
GETTYSBURG, STALINGRAD...






...THE PEOPLE OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI, FLEEING FROM THEIR BURNING CITIES, THE RAW FLESH PEELING AND DROPPING FROM THEIR BONES...



...THE TERRIFIED CHILDREN OF BAGHDAD, HUDDLED IN THE BASEMENTS OF THEIR HOMES AS THE EARTH SHOOK WITH THE POUNDING OF ANOTHER NIGHT'S BOMBARDMENT...

...THEY ALL KNEW THAT WAR IS HELL.



EVERY MOTHER, FATHER, LOVING WIFE, WHO HAS WAITED FOR THE TELEGRAM, THE LETTER, THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR TO ANNOUNCE THAT ONE MORE BRAVE SOLDIER HAS FALLEN...

...THEY DON'T NEED TO BE TOLD THAT WAR IS HELL...

FOR THOSE FALLEN SOLDIERS, AT LEAST THE WAR IS OVER. DEATH BRINGS AN END...

...BUT FOR THIS WARRIOR, THERE IS NO DEATH. NO END. NO RELIEF.

FOR HIM, WAR TRULY IS AN EVERLASTING HELL.





AT HIS COMMAND, THEY RISE ONCE MORE FROM THEIR FOXHOLES, SHAMBLING FORWARDS ACROSS THIS MISBEGOTTEN NO MAN'S LAND.

How  
MANY  
TIMES?

How LONG?

TIME HERE IS NOT  
MEASURED IN  
DAYS OR YEARS.

BACK AND FORTH THEY GO,  
BATTLING OVER AND OVER FOR THE  
SAME PATCH OF TORN, BLEEDING  
EARTH, IN THIS ENDLESS DRESS-  
REHEARSAL FOR ARMAGEDDON.



SOMETIMES HE FORGETS THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER PLACE, WHERE THE SUN ROSE AND SET, WHERE BATTLES BEGAN AND ENDED, WHERE THE DEAD WERE BURIED AND THE SURVIVORS PRAYED AND CLUNG TO THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD RETURN TO THE ONES THEY LOVED.





FRANCE, JULY 1st 1916. THE FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME. THIS WILL BECOME KNOWN AS THE FIRST WORLD WAR, BUT BEFORE THAT IT WILL BE CALLED THE GREAT WAR - THE WAR TO END ALL WARS. BECAUSE AFTER THIS, WHO WOULD DREAM THAT MEN COULD EVER GO TO WAR AGAIN?



IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, 20,000 BRITISH TROOPS WILL DIE. 40,000 WILL BE INJURED. 60,000 CASUALTIES IN THIS SINGLE BLOODIEST DAY IN MILITARY HISTORY.



THESE MEN DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WAITING FOR THEM. THEY JOINED UP FOR ACTION AND EXCITEMENT. THEY ANSWERED THE CALL FOR KING AND COUNTRY. TO SHOW THE HUN WHAT ENGLISHMEN ARE MADE OF.



WE'LL SEE. OH YES, WE'LL SEE WHAT ENGLISHMEN ARE MADE OF.



CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM KNOWS THAT HIS MEN ARE UNDER-TRAINED AND THAT THEY WILL BE FIGHTING BATTLE-HARDENED VETERANS WHO HAVE HAD MONTHS TO DIG IN AND ESTABLISH THEIR DEFENSES.



HE KNOWS THAT MANY OF HIS MEN WILL DIE TODAY. HE HAS LONG DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, BUT STILL, JUST THIS ONCE, HE PRAYS FOR THEM...


... AND FOR ONE IN PARTICULAR.



AS THE BOMBARDMENT RIPS THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE APART, THE SOUND OF SHELLING FADES AND HE REMEMBERS OTHER FAR-OFF FIELDS...







IT IS 1896 AND THOMAS CORAM'S FAMILY HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THOMAS THINKS OF HIMSELF AS AN ENLIGHTENED MAN. HE BELIEVES, WITH PAINE AND JEFFERSON, THAT ALL MEN ARE BORN EQUAL.

"Do you love me, Thomas?"  
"I do, I do, I do."  
"Say it then."  
"I love you, Selma."  
"Even though you are a man with expectations? And I am-"

SHE FALLS SILENT. HER EYES DROP.

"What, Selma? Beautiful? Yes. Intelligent, vivacious, adorable? Yes, yes and yes."  
"I'm your father's servant, Thomas. His colored servant."  
"Love conquers all things, Selma."  
"Does it? Then walk home with me. You don't have to hold my hand. Just walk with me. Will you do that?"

AH. NO ANSWER. SHE SIGHS AS SHE TAKES UP HER BONNET AND TURNS HER HEAD AWAY WHEN HE TRIES TO MAKE IT RIGHT WITH ANOTHER KISS.

THE WORLD IS CHANGING BUT NOT THAT FAST. THERE IS CLASS AND THERE IS RACE AND THERE IS BREEDING. HE WILL HAVE HIS WAY WITH HER IN HIS FATHER'S FIELDS, BUT HE WILL NOT WALK AT HER SIDE. NOT IN THIS CENTURY.



A FEW DAYS LATER, HIS FATHER ALLOWS THOMAS TO JOIN THE MEN FOR CIGARS. A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG THOMAS, TO SIT WITH THESE MIDDLE-AGED PATRIARCHS AS THEY DISCUSS THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.

"The twentieth century will bring a new age of peace and equality, mark my words."  
"You have brought some strange ideas back with you from our former colonies, Richard."  
"And an interesting maid servant."  
"Selma?"  
"Her skin is light for an African."

THOMAS FEELS THE HEAT RISE TO HIS CHEEKS AT THE MENTION OF SELMA.

"Do you know why American negroes are light-skinned? It seems their slave owners bred with them. To improve the stock."  
"Terrible. Terrible thing."  
"Slavery was an abomination."  
"Yes, yes. Quite agree. Rights of man and all that. But the thing that we must never forget is, that no matter how much white blood they have in them, a negro is still a negro, Richard. And negroes will never amount to much."  
"You are wrong, Charles. The coloreds will find their place in society and they must be treated kindly and humanely."

HIS FATHER'S LIBERALISM IS AS WEAK AS HIS MOTHER'S TEA. THOMAS BREAKS HIS SILENCE AT LAST, DRAWLING WITH UNACCUSTOMED SARCASM.


"Like horses perhaps? Or dogs?"

HE LEAVES THE ROOM BEFORE HIS FATHER CAN ORDER HIM OUT, FEELING THE STERN EYES UPON HIS NECK.

SELMA WOULD BE PROUD OF HIM.







HE SEES THE CHILD ONLY ONCE. SHE STANDS OUTSIDE IN THE RAIN UNTIL HE GOES OUT TO HER AND THE BABY SHE CRADLES IN HER ARMS. A BEAUTIFUL BOY.

IT TEARS HIM APART...

"His name is Michael.."

...THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT HIM...

"I'll look after you, Selma. I promise."

...THE BITTERNESS IN HER VOICE...

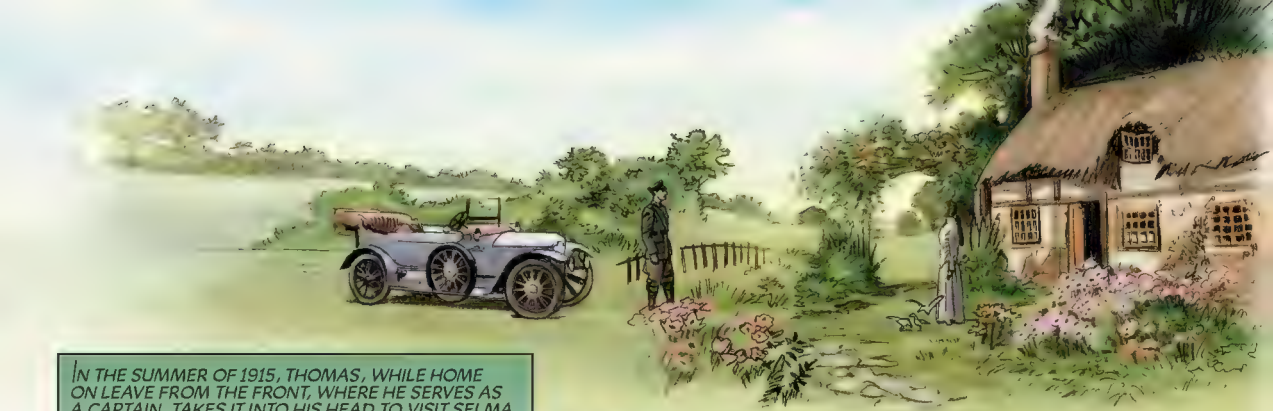
"Are you proposing to me?"

SHE LOOKS SO PROUD AND ALL HE CAN FEEL IS SHAME.

HE KEEPS HIS WORD. HE NEVER FORGETS THEM. EVERY MONTH HE SENDS HER MONEY, EVEN AFTER HE MARRIES AND HAS OTHER CHILDREN, WITH FAIR HAIR AND PINK CHEEKS.

IT WILL BE EIGHTEEN YEARS BEFORE HE SEES HIS SON AGAIN.






IN THE SUMMER OF 1915, THOMAS, WHILE HOME ON LEAVE FROM THE FRONT, WHERE HE SERVES AS A CAPTAIN, TAKES IT INTO HIS HEAD TO VISIT SELMA. PERHAPS IT IS THE WAR, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF IMMINENT DEATH. PERHAPS HE FEELS THERE ARE THINGS TO BE SETTLED BETWEEN THEM. HE PUTS ON HIS BEST UNIFORM, KISSES HIS WIFE ON THE CHEEK, AND DRIVES THE SEVENTY MILES TO SELMA'S COTTAGE.

AND THERE SHE STANDS, MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER, AND HE FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER ALL OVER AGAIN.

MICHAEL, AT EIGHTEEN, IS A HANDSOME BOY, INTELLIGENT AND SHARP AS A KNIFE. BUT THERE IS A SHADOW HANGING OVER HIM. A SULLENNESS IN HIS EYES, WHEN HE LOOKS AT THOMAS.

SELMA HAS TOLD MICHAEL THAT HIS FATHER IS DEAD. THOMAS LONGS TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH, TO PUT HIS ARMS AROUND THE BOY AND ASK HIS FORGIVENESS. INSTEAD THEY SHAKE HANDS FORMALLY. HE IS A FAMILY FRIEND, NOTHING MORE.



HE RETURNS TO THE COTTAGE SEVERAL TIMES AND ON THE LAST DAY, THEY MAKE LOVE, WHILE MICHAEL IS AWAY IN TOWN.

AFTERWARDS, THEY LIE TOGETHER IN SILENCE AND THOMAS ACHES FOR ALL THE LOST YEARS.



# BRITONS

WHEN MICHAEL RETURNS, HE IS BURSTING WITH THE NEWS THAT HE HAS ANSWERED LORD KITCHENER'S CALL, SIGNED UP TO FIGHT FOR ENGLAND AND THE EMPIRE.

SELMA WEEPS WHEN SHE HEARS IT, BUT THOMAS REASSURES HER. THE WAR OFFICE WILL NOT SEND COLORED TROOPS TO FIGHT. THEY ARE TO BE USED FOR AMMUNITION CARRIERS AND GENERAL LABOR. NO BLACK BRITISH SOLDIER WILL BE ALLOWED TO SEE ACTION ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

MICHAEL LAUGHS AT THAT.

"I didn't sign up as colored. My skin's light enough to pass as white. I have a good English name and I speak the King's English with a Devonshire accent. No one will challenge me."

HE LEANS FORWARD, MEETING THOMAS'S EYES WITH A STEADY GAZE.

"You'll keep my secret won't you Captain? You won't betray me?"

THE LAST TIME HE SEES SELMA, THOMAS PROMISES HER. HE SWEARS ON HIS LIFE TO TAKE CARE OF HER SON.

HER REPLY IS COLD AS ICE:

"If anything happens to Michael...

...don't come back..."

"WANTS  
**YOU**  
JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!  
GOD SAVE THE KING

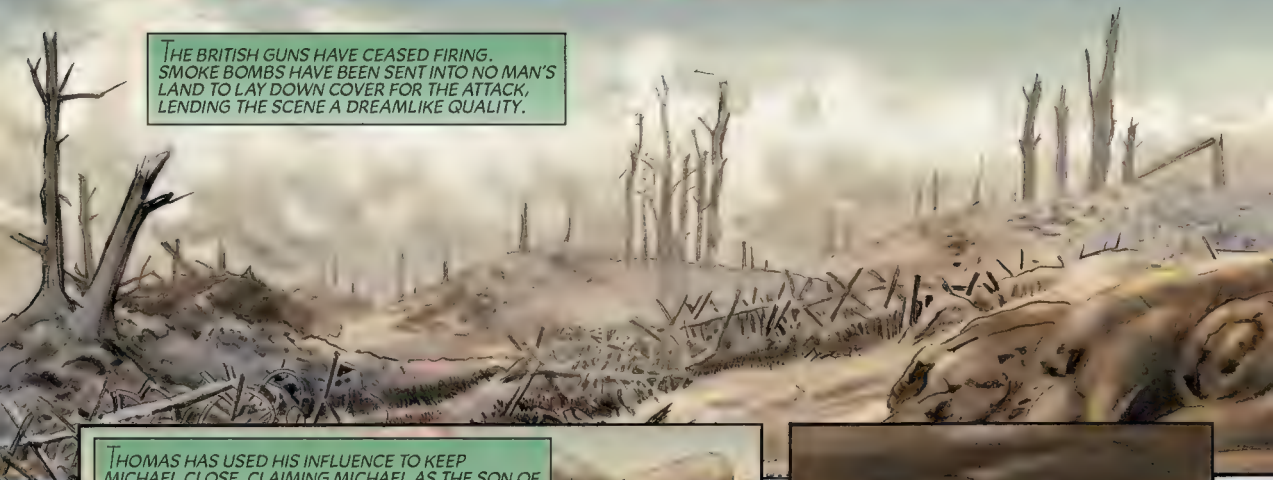






"...don't ever come back."

THE BRITISH GUNS HAVE CEASED FIRING. SMOKE BOMBS HAVE BEEN SENT INTO NO MAN'S LAND TO LAY DOWN COVER FOR THE ATTACK, LENDING THE SCENE A DREAMLIKE QUALITY.



THOMAS HAS USED HIS INFLUENCE TO KEEP MICHAEL CLOSE, CLAIMING MICHAEL AS THE SON OF A FAMILY FRIEND. THE ARMY'S POLICY OF ALLOWING ACQUAINTANCES TO SERVE TOGETHER IN THE 'PALS' BATTALIONS, MEANS WHOLE COMMUNITIES WILL SEE THEIR YOUNG MEN WIPED OUT AT A STROKE.



GOOD LUCK, MICHAEL.



7:30. ZERO HOUR. THE WHISTLES SOUND ALONG THE RAGGED LINE OF TRENCHES AND OVER THEY GO. NO HESITATION. POOR BRAVE MAGNIFICENT BLOODY FOOLS.





THE ENEMY LINES HAVE BEEN POUNDED  
RELENTLESSLY BY THE BRITISH ARTILLERY.  
THE HOPE IS THAT THEIR GUNS HAVE  
BEEN PUT OUT OF COMMISSION AND  
THAT THE DEMORALISED GERMANS  
WILL BE QUICKLY OVER-RUN.

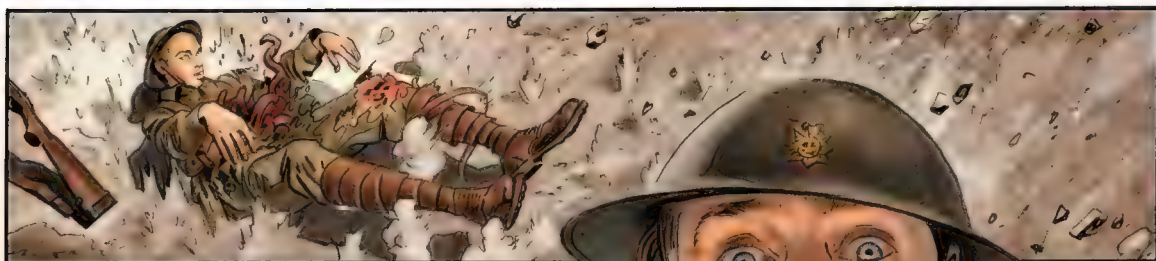


FOR A FEW MOMENTS THERE IS AN EERIE SILENCE  
AS THEY PASS INTO THE VEIL OF SMOKE.



THEN ALL HELL LETS LOOSE.





**MICHAEL!**







MICHAEL!



MICHAEL,  
LISTEN TO  
ME...

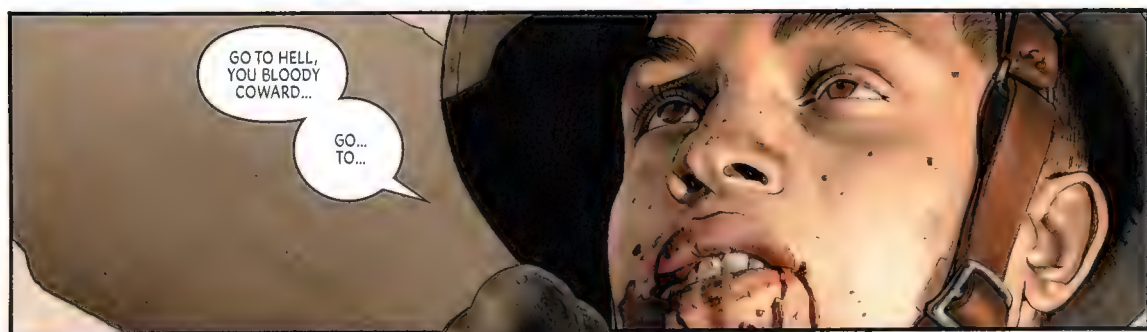
DON'T... WORRY...  
CAPTAIN... I... KNOW  
WHO YOU ARE... I KNEW...  
THE FIRST TIME I... I  
SAW YOU...



YOU RAN  
AWAY FROM US, ALL  
THOSE YEARS.

MY GOD...  
WERE YOU  
SO... SO  
ASHAMED OF  
ME?

I'M SO  
SORRY  
MICHAEL.



GO TO HELL,  
YOU BLOODY  
COWARD...

GO...  
TO...



STAY  
WITH ME,  
MICHAEL.

STAY  
WITH  
ME...

IT'S TOO  
LATE. HE CAN'T  
HEAR YOU.







THOMAS NEVER DOUBTS THAT THIS IS REAL, THAT MAMMON'S OFFER IS GENUINE.

KNEELING THERE WITH THE UNHOLY STENCH OF BLOOD AND SHIT AND CORDITE IN HIS NOSTRILS, AS THE WORLD SCREAMS AND SHATTERS AROUND HIM AND HIS SON'S LAST MEAL SPILLS FROM HIS RUPTURED BELLY, CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM NEVER HESITATES.

THIS BOY'S LIFE IS WORTH HIS SOUL A HUNDRED TIMES OVER.



YES.

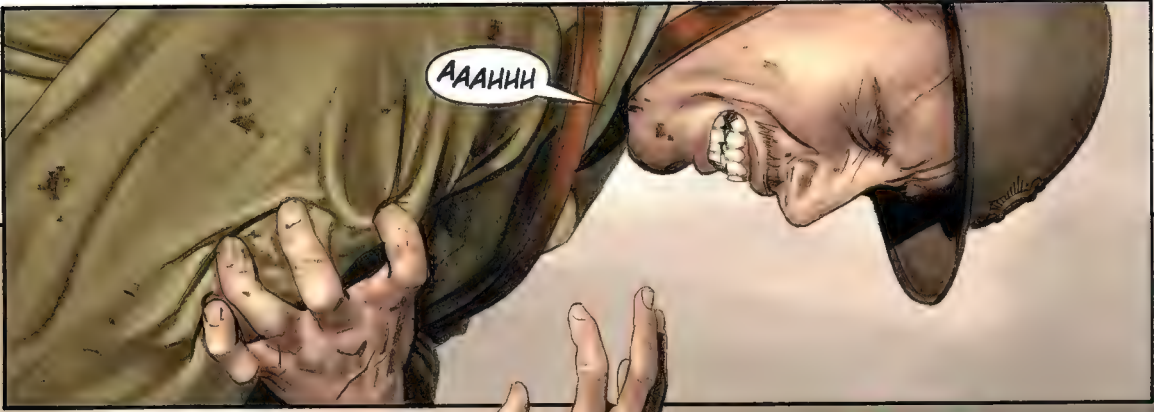


THERE'S A GOOD CHAP.

WHAT DO I DO?

YOU TAKE HIS WOUNDS UPON YOUR OWN FLESH.

I SHOULD WARN YOU, THIS IS GOING TO STING A LITTLE.




AAAAHHH




AAARGHHH!






AND THEN, A MIRACLE. MICHAEL WILLIAMS RISES FROM THE CARNAGE AND WALKS THROUGH THE STORM OF BULLETS AND SHRAPNEL. A HUNDRED YARDS, TWO HUNDRED, THREE...

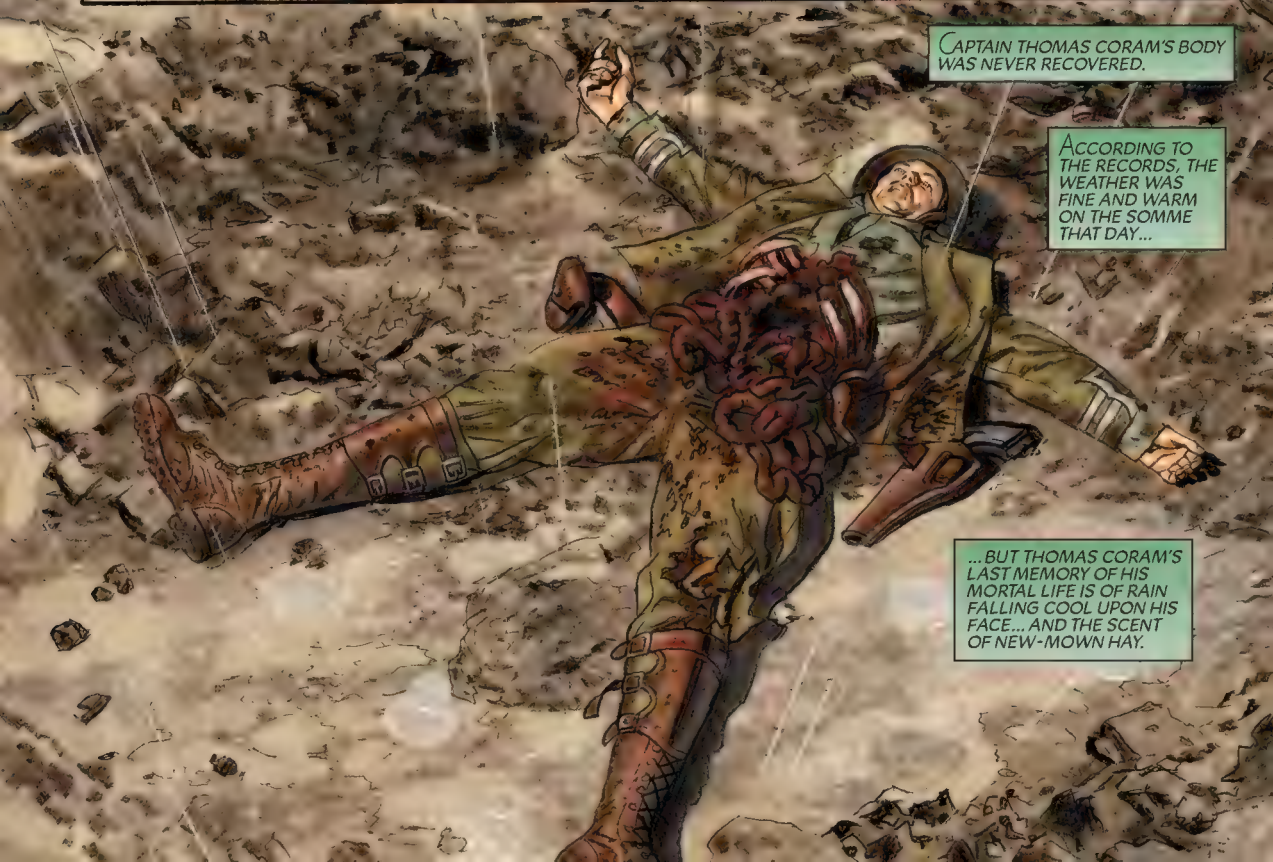
AS OTHER MEN FALL AROUND HIM, HE PASSES FROM THE GREEDY JAWS OF DEATH.



NOT QUITE UNTOUCHED, HE HAS STOPPED A 'BLIGHTY ONE'. A WOUND THAT WILL HAVE HIM SENT HOME TO ENGLAND AND HIS MOTHER'S LOVING ARMS.



A WOUND THAT WILL CAUSE HIM TO WALK WITH A LIMP FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE AND REMIND HIM ALWAYS, THAT HE HAD A FATHER.




CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM'S BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.

ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS, THE WEATHER WAS FINE AND WARM ON THE SOMME THAT DAY...

...BUT THOMAS CORAM'S LAST MEMORY OF HIS MORTAL LIFE IS OF RAIN FALLING COOL UPON HIS FACE... AND THE SCENT OF NEW-MOWN HAY.





IT'S  
THE  
LAST  
RAIN  
HE  
WILL  
EVER  
FEEL.

YOU'VE  
SERVED ME  
WELL, MAMMON,  
AS ALWAYS. THIS  
ONE WILL MAKE  
AN EXCELLENT  
WARRIOR.

HIS SOUL  
IS A FINE VINTAGE.  
A SUBTLE BOUQUET OF  
GUILT, A HEADY FLAVOR  
OF SELF-LOATHING,  
DELICATELY SPICED WITH  
ANGER, AND A TRACE  
OF BITTERNESS.

AND,  
~~~~~  
YES, THAT LINGERING  
AFTERTASTE OF  
REGRET.

LOOK  
AT ME, LITTLE  
MAN!

I'LL SQUEEZE  
YOUR PATHETIC  
BROKEN HEART UNTIL  
YOU SPIT BLOOD AND  
PISS FIRE!

YOU'LL  
HAVE A NEW  
NAME NOW, AND  
A NEW PURPOSE.  
MY SERVITOR....

...MY...  
**HELLSPAWN!!**

**AAAAARRGHHH!!!**



"WHEN ARMAGEDDON COMES, YOU  
WILL SERVE AS A COMMANDER IN MY ARMY.  
YOU WILL LEAD A LEGION OF DEMON WARRIORS  
AGAINST THE FORCES OF HEAVEN. UNTIL THAT  
DAY, YOU'LL REHEARSE YOUR ROLE WITHOUT  
PAUSE, WITHOUT A MOMENT'S RESPIRE.

"YOU WILL WAGE WAR  
UNTIL WAR BECOMES YOUR  
NATURE. WITH EVERY BLOW  
YOU STRIKE IN MY NAME, THE  
LIFE YOU'VE LEFT BEHIND  
WILL SLIP FURTHER AWAY.

"WITH EVERY SHOT  
YOU FIRE, YOU'LL LOSE  
ONE MORE PRECIOUS  
MEMORY UNTIL ALL YOU  
SEE AND SMELL AND  
HEAR IS WAR...

"...AND ALL  
THAT YOU  
REMEMBER  
IS WAR, AND  
ALL THAT YOU  
ARE IS WAR,  
WAR,  
WAR!!!"







... BUT HE NEVER FORGETS WHY HE IS HERE, OR THE LIFE HE PAID FOR WITH HIS SOUL ...





AFTER THE WAR ENDED, MICHAEL TOOK HIS MOTHER BACK TO THE USA. SELMA NEVER MARRIED AGAIN. IN HER HEART SHE KNEW THAT THOMAS HAD KEPT HIS WORD.

SHE HAD LOVED HIM THROUGH ALL THE YEARS THEY WERE APART AND SHE LOVED HIM UNTIL SHE DIED.

MICHAEL BECAME A MUSICIAN AND PLAYED JAZZ IN THE CLUBS OF CHICAGO AND NEW ORLEANS.

IN 1926 HE MET A GIRL WHO SANG LIKE AN ANGEL AND TOOK HIS BREATH AWAY.

TWO YEARS LATER, THEY MARRIED.

BY THE NINETEEN-SIXTIES, MICHAEL WAS SURROUNDED BY LOVING CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.





THOMAS COULD NEVER KNOW WHAT KIND OF LIFE HIS SON WOULD LIVE, BUT HE TRUSTED IT WOULD BE A GOOD ONE.

EVEN IN THE PIT OF HELL, THAT KNOWLEDGE HAS KEPT HIM FROM DESPAIR.



ALL THE WHILE, MAMMON WATCHES AND WAITS. THOMAS IS A MAGNIFICENT HELLSPAWN, BUT HE IS NOT THE GREATEST. THE GREATEST IS YET TO COME...

... AND MAMMON KNOWS HOW TO BIDE HIS TIME ...



I KNOW A GRANDPA ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE FAVORITES, BUT JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME...

...YOU'RE SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL...



...MY LITTLE WANDA...







Tyrant  
Lizard  
King

EMPIRE